

Media Release:

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Cold Blooded but Warm Hearted...

Alice Springs Junior Rangers came face to face with a range of reptiles on their recent excursion to the Alice Springs Reptile Centre as part of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and The Arts Junior Ranger program.

Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service Community Education Senior Ranger Michael Barritt said over 70 Junior Rangers and family members went along to enjoy the enormous range of over 30 different reptile species.

“There is a passionate interest in reptiles by all the Junior Rangers with many of the kids declaring them their favourite group of animals,” Mr Barritt said.

“Terry the saltwater crocodile was a great hit and other top end species such as the Frilled-neck Lizard allowed the kids an insight into the reptiles of a vastly different ecosystem to our south.

“Justin Rutherford from the Reptile Centre had the children enraptured with his display of inland reptiles, particularly the feeding of cockroaches to Central Bearded Dragons.

“The talk had extraordinary information about reptiles including the potential danger that some of the local snakes present and how to reduce the risks.

“After the talk everyone had the opportunity to carefully handle the friendly Olive Python and Black-headed Python, as well as the sleepy Shingle-back Lizards.

“The kids were also thrilled to get up close and personal with the silky Blue-tongue Lizard who was either offering kisses to all – or checking if they were edible.”

Michael Barritt said the 2008 Junior Ranger program has exploded with popularity with over 90 registered members.

“The program gives kids a deeper understanding of and love for the local natural environment,” Mr Barritt said.

“Each year we are lucky enough to enjoy a subsidised visit to the Alice Springs Reptile Centre and it’s always a highlight for the kids.”

There are still places available in the Alice Springs Junior Ranger program for 8-14 year olds. Nature based activities and talks can also be arranged for schools. For more information contact Michael Barritt on 8951 8247 or 0401 112 525.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Michael Barritt on 8951 8247 or 0401 112 525

Image – Rachel and Amanda Mesler holding a pair of Shingle-back Lizards

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